

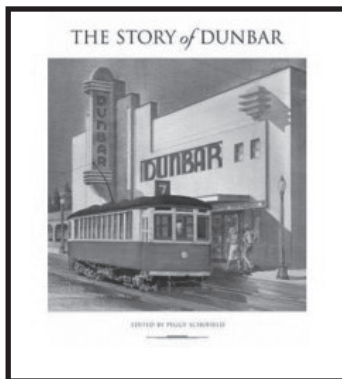
Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Spectacular Show and Tell



also a chance for our members to get acquainted.

The program will start at 7:30 with reports on two recently published books, which have received VHS sponsorships. Jean Mann will speak on the book *Women Lead the Way*, a fascinating history of the University Women's Club of Vancouver, which celebrates its centenary this month.

Another beautiful new book, which received VHS support, is *The Story of Dunbar: Voices of a Vancouver Neighbourhood*. It's the interesting account of how this "streetcar suburb" developed from forest and farmland. Helen Spiegelman will talk about this delightful neighbourhood project.

We will also have news from our City Reflections team, who were out filming the streets of downtown Vancouver on Sunday, May 13th.

Several of our VHS members are actively involved in a variety of interesting historical research and projects and we will have chance to hear about them.

May is the month when the Vancouver Historical Society holds its Annual General Meeting and election of the Executive. May is also the month when we get to hear about projects, in which the VHS or VHS members are directly involved. It's

Bruce Watson will speak on a plan to create historical markers in Stanley Park and Devonian Park.

Chuck Davis will speak on his ongoing research and work on his *The History of Metropolitan Vancouver*.

Vancouver Courier writer Lisa Smedman will talk about her research into Vancouver's many ethnic communities.

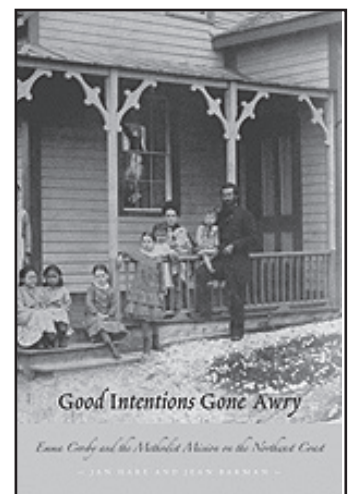
The Eveleigh Street and Chinatown Tunnels will be John Atkin's topic.

Larry Wong will speak on his Chinatown research.

The audience will be able to ask the speakers questions about their various projects.

The program will also include the presentation of the B.C. Historical Federation Book Award to Jan Hare and Jean Barman for *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast*.

After the presentation, refreshments will be served. At about 8:40, we will start our Annual General Meeting. Reports will be presented and the election of officers will be held.



Next Meeting: Thursday, May 24 at 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum

PREZNOTES

Wrapping up a Lively Year

Circle May 24 in your calendar! It will be our last meeting of the 2006-2007 season, and it's a double-feature. Following a tradition extending back to 2006, the first feature will be our annual "Show and Tell," highlighting work by VHS historians. We'll begin with brief presentations of two new books published with VHS support, and continue with seven glimpses of work in progress by VHS members, with time for reactions from all of us.

The second feature, beginning about 8:40, will be our VHS Annual General Meeting, with official reports, election of the 2007-2008 Executive (see the slate of nominees in this issue), and words of thanks to those retiring from office. And as if all that were not enough for one action-packed evening, delectable refreshments will follow.

For me, this meeting will have a special poignancy: it's my last official duty as VHS president. After four years, it's time to pass the torch, and I'm delighted to know that it will be carried high and capably into the new year. In this final Preznotes, I want to thank all of the officers, directors and volunteers who have made this past year such a fruitful one for the VHS and so much fun for me.

We're fortunate that most of them are willing to serve another term, so another good year is guaranteed. Special thanks go to directors Barbara Coles and Wayne Norton, and to appointed volunteers Elizabeth Walker and Nancy Stubbs, who are retiring from their positions. You can join in expressing our appreciation to them at the AGM. See you there!

Paul Flucke, President
604-732-7742; pauflucke@shaw.ca

Welcome New Members:

Oralia Gomez Harvey Lui
Jason Murray Kirsten Strand

Nominees for 2007-2008 VHS Executive

In its role as Nominating Committee, the current VHS Executive is pleased to submit the following full slate of nominees for the 2007-2008 Executive, to be elected at our May 24 Annual General Meeting.

President	Bruce Watson
Vice President	Larry Wong
Recording Secretary	Sidney Madden
Treasurer	Paul Flucke
Director	Scott Anderson
Director	Chuck Davis
Director	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Jim McGraw
Director	Lisa Smedman

All terms of office are for one year beginning June 1, 2007. Additional nominations will be accepted at the AGM, provided that the nominee is a current VHS member and is present at the meeting.

Many More Entrants in Begbie History Contest

This year the Vancouver Historical Society contributed prizes of \$100 for the top five Vancouver students writing the Begbie Canadian History Contest. Thanks to this support the number of Vancouver schools entering the contest increased from three in 2006 to ten in 2007. We hope to build on this year's success next year.

The Vancouver winners were as follows:

- Stephen Fan, St. George's, 95%
- Simon Yu, University Transition, 95%
- Jessica Yuen, David Thompson, 93%
- Ainsley Underhill, Lord Byng, 93%
- C. J. Brassington, Notre Dame, 92%



Response to the contest was the best ever. In Canada as a whole there were 1,445 entrants in English and 142 in French, including students in grades 10, 11 and 12. There was a good distribution of prize winners from across the country. The five winners in English and in French each received \$750.

Congratulations to all the winners!

Historica Fair Another Success

The study of history was alive and well among the students at the recent Historica fairs. Twenty-five VHS adjudicators took part in the annual Vancouver elementary school fairs. Their job was to ask children why they had chosen a particular topic, what they had learned, how they had researched their topics and how they related to Canadian history. A key ingredient was enthusiasm.

This year students from grades four to seven presented history projects at seven local schools. Children were asked write a project report on a subject relevant to Canadian history. They were to illustrate their topic in the space of a small cardboard enclosure and give an oral explanation of their knowledge of the subject. Veterans, Hudsons Bay Company, First Nations, Family Histories were some of the categories. Selected projects then went on to the Regional Fair at the Vancouver Museum and Vancouver Maritime Museum.

The VHS provided a \$500 grant to the Vancouver Regional Historica and book awards including two VHS Vancouver Regional awards which went to Madison Edge for her project *A Comparison of Two Days: Sacred Heart and St. Georges Elementary* and Claudia Chung for *Avalon Dairy*.

Next year the fair will be held on May 2nd and 3rd. Funding is a concern. Interested companies and individuals are encouraged to support this worthwhile project. Emphasis is on participation, rather



Donations Set New Record

Ten VHS members donated \$450 to our Operating Fund during March and April, bringing us to a total of \$2,054 for the fiscal year ended April 30 — a new one-year record! Also during this fiscal year, we received \$500 for our Publication and Research Fund, and \$13,370 in individual and corporate gifts for our City Reflections DVD project. A hearty *thank you* to everyone who helped.

Historic Photos Website

The VHS 2006-2007 speaker's series began last September with a fascinating presentation of early Vancouver photos. Dudley Booth told an interesting story of 1,000 rare negatives being rescued from a trip to the dump. They turned out to be priceless photos taken by early Vancouver photographer Cyril Littlebury. Dudley went on to painstakingly develop and research these negatives. He has now put together a captivating website featuring historic photos of Canada from 1895 to 1940. Take a look at his website at: www.historicphotos.ca

Upcoming Speakers & Events

Watch this space in next month's newsletter for another great line-up of presentations in our speaker's series with our new 2007-2008 season beginning in September.

Stanley Park Statues, Monuments & Plaques Tour

Sunday, July 29 Field Trip
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Members only)

You may be familiar with the Stanley Park statues of Lord Stanley with his upraised arms, poet Robert Burns and maybe even the handsome park monument to U.S. President Warren Harding. What about some of the other plaques and monuments in the park?

Some have become obscured over time — in at least one instance (the monument to Pauline Johnson) they became literally obscured by growing plant life!

Do you know about the plaques to Shakespearean actors, the Japanese war memorial, the Chehalis monument, the "Jimmy Cunningham" plaque (honoring the man who built much of the park's seawall)?

These and many more are the theme of a history-packed bus tour on Sunday, July 29. The Vancouver Historical Society has chartered a Vancouver Trolley Company bus for a fascinating tour of Stanley Park's monuments and markers.

Noted writer and historian Chuck Davis of the Vancouver Historical Society will lead the tour, which will be free for paid-up members of the VHS. The total trip time will be about two hours. The bus accommodates just 34 passengers, so reservations will be required. All those who have reservations for this exciting tour are asked to be in the parking lot of the Vancouver Museum for pick-up at 1:30. The parking lot will also serve as the drop-off point.

We will talk about the trip at the May 24th Annual General Meeting. Details of how to reserve a seat will appear in the June newsletter. Seats will be limited to two per family membership.

Comrade Dad: A Father and a Vancouver Bookstore

Last Month's Speaker: Karin Lee

From the mid-1960s into the 1980s a Vancouver man named Wally Lee managed a small shop at 33 East Hastings called China Arts and Crafts. He sold curios imported from China . . . and he also sold a variety of books, mostly political in nature and supportive of Chinese Communist ideas, including, of course, Mao Zedong's famous Little Red Book.

Lee's daughter, Karin, a filmmaker, has made a short documentary about her father, the exquisitely titled *Comrade Dad*. She showed it to a good crowd at the VHS's April 26th meeting in the Joyce Walley room of the Vancouver Museum. "It's not a standard documentary," she told us, "more experimental."

Amateur actors played the Lee family in the film, which outlines the difficulties they faced because Dad ran a Communist bookstore. (One wryly funny aspect of the film was the "self-criticism" sessions held around the family table, sessions patterned after those in Mao's China. The Lee kids, more Western-minded, used the opportunity to criticize each other.)

Oddly, Wally Lee wasn't a Communist, although he was a dedicated socialist and believed — at first — that Mao was on the right track. In the Vancouver Chinatown of the time that could be an uncomfortable stance: more than once bricks were thrown through the shop's windows, and the pro-Nationalist Chinese Benevolent Association here called Lee a traitor. The RCMP kept a file on him.

Even today, more than 20 years after Lee's death, some people who had been supporters and patrons of the shop declined to participate in the filming.

With the death of Mao and the ascendance of Deng Xiao-

peng the Maoist influence, already weakening, came to an end. "Mao's revolution," said Karin Lee, "was over." And so was the relevance of the literature sold at China Arts and Crafts. Then the property was sold and Wally Lee had to vacate. He began to sell off the books at greatly reduced prices. "As the store emptied," said Karin Lee, "so did my father's spirit."

The store closed in May of 1982. Wally Lee died a few months later.

Karin Lee, who had visited China with her family at age 13, had been taken aback even at that early age at the disparity between the glowing rhetoric of the Communist propaganda and the brute reality of daily life in China. She would eventually come to see the flaws of the system.

But her affection and respect for her father never dimmed, and her film is a proud, warm record of that.



RIGHT: Karin Lee

Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2006 - 2007 (elected May 25, 2006)

EXECUTIVE:

President	Paul Flucke	Director	Chuck Davis
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce Watson	Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Treasurer (Vacant)	Paul Flucke (pro tem)	Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Secretary (Historica Fair)	Sidney Madden	Director (Research Service)	Wayne Norton
Director (Newsletter Mailing)	Barbara Coles	Director	Larry Wong

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